

ARTS *of the* ALBEMARLE

For Immediate Release



Contact:

Natalie J. Peel, Director of Marketing

Elizabeth City, North Carolina

Phone (252) 338-6455

npeel@artsaoa.com

Arts of the Albemarle Awarded NC Rural Center Economic Innovation Grant

(Elizabeth City, NC-June 25) Arts of the Albemarle announced at its Annual Meeting the award of a \$100,000 Economic Innovation Grant from the North Carolina Rural Center.

The proposal “AoA-Creating a Community-based Creative Economy” was approved in May with a broad base of support including Representative Bill Owens and Senator Marc Basnight, President Pro Tempore of the NC Legislature and Secretary Linda A. Carlisle, Department of Cultural Resources. “The prospect of significant economic gain and societal benefit to citizens in Northeast North Carolina through this project is exciting,” says Carlisle who continues, “I believe the organization is perfectly positioned in its new world class facility to lead the region in economic development strategies around the creative economy. More importantly, the organization is committed to providing complete access in a distinctly underserved region of our state as it develops innovative partnerships to promote the development of creative capacity in the schools and the business community.”

Arts of the Albemarle has done extensive research identifying models which are applicable to the proposal. Proven models of success include HandMade in America, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, and Hurrah Players. AoA has also successfully engaged local organizations in this proposal including the Museum of the Albemarle, Port Discover, and Albemarle Health. “We are excited to be a part of this multi-layered partnership; and we are confident our community will benefit greatly from this project,” Sharon Tanner, President of Albemarle Health.

AoA will work closely with consultants Robert Donnan and Becky Anderson of HandMade in America to facilitate regional planning exercises, study the creative economy of the region and develop a strategic plan to implement initiatives to provide real impact on the region’s economic direction. AOA will host a “Kick-Off” meeting at The Center, on July 15th announcing the first stage of the strategic planning process. This organizing event will engage representatives from across the region in diverse but related fields including tourism, economic development, visual and performing arts, public and private sectors and education. The kick-off event will be open to the general public.

HandMade in America is a non-profit organization promoting craft and culture for community and economic development in Western North Carolina. For more information go to www.handmadeinamerica.org.

Arts of the Albemarle, headquartered at The Center, is a regional non-profit arts council for Pasquotank, Gates and Camden counties. For more information go to www.artsaoa.com.